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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1        1. A method for enabling a user to perform a decorating session for a space, comprising the steps of:  
2        (a) receiving, at a web server, a request from a remote client computer for access to a decorating web  
3 site supported by the web server; and  
4        (b) transmitting, in response to the request, software from the web server to the client computer,  
5 wherein, when executed on the client computer, the software enables the user to perform the decorating  
6 session for the space.

1        2. The invention of claim 1, wherein the software enables the user to perform the decorating session  
2 for the space without any subsequent communication between the client computer and the web server.

1        3. The invention of claim 1, wherein the software comprises an applet, which, when executed on the  
2 client computer, automatically transmits one or more additional requests to the web server for one or more  
3 data files to be downloaded to the client computer.

1        4. The invention of claim 3, wherein the one or more data files comprise:  
2        (1) a space graphical user interface (GUI) file corresponding to a GUI for the space to be decorated;  
3        (2) a structural object GUI file corresponding to a GUI identifying one or more structural objects that  
4 can be added to the space by the user during the decorating session;  
5        (3) a structural object data file for each structural object identified in the structural object GUI; and  
6        (4) a decorative material GUI file corresponding to a GUI identifying one or more decorative materials  
7 that can be applied to the one or more structural objects during the decorating session, wherein the  
8 software causes the space GUI, the structural object GUI, and the decorative material GUI to be displayed  
9 on a display device configured to the client computer.

1        5. The invention of claim 4, wherein, when the user selects a particular decorative material for a  
2 particular structural object, the software applies the decorative material to the structural object in real time  
3 to update the display of the space GUI.

1        6. The invention of claim 5, wherein the software controls the appearance of the decorative material  
2 based on location of the structural object in the space GUI.

1        7. The invention of claim 4, wherein the software provides the user with a plurality of possible  
2 locations for a particular structural object represented by a single data file, wherein the software controls

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3 the appearance of the structural object based on the location in the space GUI selected by the user for the  
4 structural object.

1 8. The invention of claim 4, wherein at least one structural object data file corresponds to a  
2 rectangular image of the corresponding structural object and the software treats any region of the  
3 rectangular image outside of the structural object as transparent when displaying the structural object in the  
4 space GUI.

1 9. The invention of claim 4, wherein the software controls the display of a first type of structural  
2 object based on relative order in which different structural objects are selected during the decorating  
3 session, while controlling the display of a second type of structural object independent of relative order in  
4 which different structural objects are selected.

1 10. The invention of claim 1, wherein the software enables the user to generate a listing documenting  
2 results of the decorating session for use in a subsequent decorating session performed by either the user or  
3 another user.

1 11. The invention of claim 1, wherein the software is able to generate a cost associated with results of  
2 the decorating system.

1 12. The invention of claim 1, wherein the software enables the user to make a purchase based on  
2 results of the decorating session.

1 13. The invention of claim 1, wherein:  
2 the software enables the user to select from a plurality of structural objects to be added into the space  
3 during the decorating session; and  
4 the software enables the user to select from a plurality of decorative materials to be applied to the  
5 selected structural objects during the decorating session.

1 14. The invention of claim 13, wherein the software is able to identify at least one of the decorative  
2 materials to match a sample represented by a user-provided scanned image loaded onto the client  
3 computer.

1 15. The invention of claim 13, wherein the software provides the user with a plurality of possible  
2 locations in the space GUI for a particular structural object.

1 16. The invention of claim 15, wherein the software controls the appearance of the particular structural  
2 object based on the location in the space GUI selected by the user.

1 17. A machine-readable medium, having encoded thereon program code, wherein, when the program  
2 code is executed on a machine, the machine implements a method for enabling a user to perform a  
3 decorating session for a space, comprising the steps of:

4 (a) receiving, at a web server, a request from a remote client computer for access to a decorating web  
5 site supported by the web server; and

6 (b) transmitting, in response to the request, software from the web server to the client computer,  
7 wherein, when executed on the client computer, the software enables the user to perform the decorating  
8 session for the space.

1 18. An apparatus for enabling a user to perform a decorating session for a space, comprising:

2 (a) means for receiving, at a web server, a request from a remote client computer for access to a  
3 decorating web site supported by the web server; and

4 (b) means for transmitting, in response to the request, software from the web server to the client  
5 computer, wherein, when executed on the client computer, the software enables the user to perform the  
6 decorating session for the space.

1 19. An apparatus for enabling a user to perform a decorating session for a space, comprising a web  
2 server configured with a database, wherein:

3 the web server is configured to receive a request from a remote client computer for access to a  
4 decorating web site supported by the web server; and

5 the web server is configured, in response to the request, to access software from the database and  
6 transmit the software to the client computer, wherein, when executed on the client computer, the software  
7 enables the user to perform the decorating session for the space.

1 20. A method for enabling a user to perform a decorating session for a space, comprising the steps of:

2 (a) receiving, at a web server, a request from a remote client computer for access to a decorating web  
3 site supported by the web server; and

4 (b) executing, in response to the request, software to enable the user to perform the decorating session  
5 for the space, wherein, during the decorating session, the user is able to:

6 (i) select one or more structural objects from a plurality of available structural objects for display  
7 in the space; and

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(ii) select a decorative material from a plurality of available decorative materials to be applied to each selected structural object independent of the decorative materials selected for any other structural object.

21. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software is executed at the client computer.

22. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software accesses:

(1) a space graphical user interface (GUI) data file corresponding to a GUI for the space to be decorated;

(2) a structural object GUI data file corresponding to a GUI identifying the plurality of available structural objects that can be added to the space by the user during the decorating session;

(3) a structural object data file for each structural object identified in the structural object GUI; and

(4) a decorative material GUI file corresponding to a GUI identifying the plurality of available decorative materials that can be applied to the available structural objects during the decorating session, wherein, during the decorating session, the software causes the space GUI, the structural object GUI, and the decorative material GUI to be displayed on a display device configured to the client computer.

23. The invention of claim 20, wherein, when the user selects a particular decorative material for a particular structural object, the software applies the decorative material to the structural object in real time to update the display of the space.

24. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software controls the appearance of the decorative material based on location of the structural object in the space.

25. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software provides the user with a plurality of possible locations for a particular structural object represented by a single data file, wherein the software controls the appearance of the structural object based on the location in the space selected by the user.

26. The invention of claim 20, wherein at least one structural object is represented by a rectangular image of the structural object and the software treats any region of the rectangular image outside of the structural object as transparent when displaying the structural object in the space.

27. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software controls the display of a first type of structural object based on relative order in which different structural objects are selected during the decorating session, while controlling the display of a second type of structural object independent of relative order in which different structural objects are selected during the decorating session.

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1        28. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software enables the user to generate a listing documenting  
2 results of the decorating session for use in a subsequent decorating session performed by either the user or  
3 another user.

1        29. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software is able to generate a cost associated with results of  
2 the decorating system.

1        30. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software enables the user to make a purchase based on  
2 results of the decorating session.

1        31. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software is able to identify at least one of the decorative  
2 materials to match a sample represented by a user-provided scanned image loaded onto the client  
3 computer.

1        32. The invention of claim 20, wherein the software provides the user with a plurality of possible  
2 locations in the space for a particular structural object.

1        33. The invention of claim 32, wherein the software controls the appearance of the particular structural  
2 object based on the location in the space selected by the user.

1        34. The invention of claim 20, wherein the decorating web site enables the user to select the space  
2 from a plurality of different space types, wherein the available structural objects for the space is a function  
3 of the space type.

1        35. A machine-readable medium, having encoded thereon program code, wherein, when the program  
2 code is executed on a machine, the machine implements a method for enabling a user to perform a  
3 decorating session for a space, comprising the steps of:

4        (a) receiving, at a web server, a request from a remote client computer for access to a decorating web  
5 site supported by the web server; and

6        (b) executing, in response to the request, software to enable the user to perform the decorating session  
7 for the space, wherein, during the decorating session, the user is able to:

8            (i) select one or more structural objects from a plurality of available structural objects for display  
9 in the space; and

10          (ii) select a decorative material from a plurality of available decorative materials to be applied to  
11 each selected structural object independent of the decorative materials selected for any other structural  
12 object.

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1 36. An apparatus for enabling a user to perform a decorating session for a space, comprising:

2 (a) means for receiving a request from a remote client computer for access to a decorating web site  
3 supported by the web server; and

4 (b) means for executing software to enable the user to perform the decorating session for the space,  
5 wherein, during the decorating session, the user is able to:

6 (i) select one or more structural objects from a plurality of available structural objects for display  
7 in the space; and

8 (ii) select a decorative material from a plurality of available decorative materials to be applied to  
9 each selected structural object independent of the decorative materials selected for any other structural  
10 object.

1 37. An apparatus for enabling a user to perform a decorating session for a space, comprising a web  
2 server configured with a database, wherein:

3 the web server is configured to receive a request from a remote client computer for access to a  
4 decorating web site supported by the web server; and

5 the web server is configured, in response to the request, to access software from the database, wherein,  
6 when the software is executed, the software enables the user to perform the decorating session for the  
7 space, wherein, during the decorating session, the user is able to:

8 (i) select one or more structural objects from a plurality of available structural objects for display  
9 in the space; and

10 (ii) select a decorative material from a plurality of available decorative materials to be applied to  
11 each selected structural object independent of the decorative materials selected for any other structural  
12 object.